



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Police warn of dangers of marijuana “dabbing” *Concentrated form of drug is dangerous to make and use*

Howard County police want to raise awareness about the potentially hazardous use of a concentrated form of marijuana, known as “dabbing.” Using the drug in this form creates a dangerously intense high; manufacturing the drug can cause serious burns and explosions.

The dabbing process can raise marijuana potency *from the standard street level of 15 percent to 80 percent or more.*

In dabbing, users inhale vapor from “dabs” of waxy or solid marijuana concentrate, creating an intense high from a single inhalation. THC—the active ingredient in marijuana—is first concentrated into an oil, called Butane Hash Oil or BHO, using butane or lighter fluid, which is very flammable and can cause fires, explosions and burns.

Once solidified, the oil concentrate may look like wax, butter, oil or amber colored glass shards, sometimes called “shatter.” Other common names for the substance include crumble, honey oil, budder, honeycomb and 710 (the word OIL upside-down and backwards).

Police in Howard County have seen multiple cases this summer involving dabbing, including an incident in which a 16-year-old girl was unresponsive and hospitalized after inhaling one “hit” of the substance. In other cases, Howard County police have arrested suspects after finding various forms of BHO, as well as butane torches, large quantities of cigarette lighters and other paraphernalia, in searches of cars or homes. In some incidents, officers have located suspect using the substance in parked cars.

“This practice known as ‘dabbing’ has become a serious concern for law enforcement,” said Police Chief Gary Gardner. “As it increases in popularity, we want young people to understand the extreme dangers and we want parents to know what to look for to help keep their kids safe.”

Dabbing can cause numerous negative side effects, including a rapid heartbeat, blackouts, feeling like something is crawling under the skin, loss of consciousness and psychotic symptoms, including paranoia and hallucinations.

One of the most dangerous aspects of dabbing is making the butane hash oil. Users make the oil by blasting butane or lighter fluid through a tube filled with dried marijuana, leaving behind the oily liquid that can be further solidified by heating the mixture. The process can cause a fireball or flash fire that has been known to blow out windows and doors.

Across the U.S., there have been increasing reports of houses and apartment buildings exploding as a result of the extraction process, leaving people in need of skin grafts and reconstructive surgery for severe burns, as well as cases involving broken bones or even death. The DEA, ATF and FEMA have all issued warnings about the dangers of this practice.

Howard County police are encouraging anyone with information about dabbing or other drug activity to call the Drug Tip Line at 410-290-DRUG.

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